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Antagonism, Conflictuality and Resilience: A New Model of Societal Radicalisation¹

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Abstract

This paper proposes that, instead of framing radicalisation as a process undergone by individuals, society's political sphere as a whole should be considered as a site of radicalisation: a social setting built on discourses which can themselves be characterised by their level(s) of 'radicalism'. The radicalisation of individuals' patterns of discursive action needs to be understood in the context of (changing) levels of societal radicalisation. Unless they also address this societal context, efforts to counter or forestall the radicalisation of individuals and groups can have only local and temporary success. Any counter-radicalisation intervention conducted purely on the basis of an individualised 'contagion' or 'strain' model will be unable to envision - let alone address - phenomena of societal radicalisation. Building on the literature on securitization, resilience and agonistic conflict, this paper offers a model of societal radicalisation and of the social and political conditions likely to foster this process. Societal radicalisation is seen in terms of the corrosion of agonistic politics and its replacement by antagonism; this is related to deficits in societal qualities of conflictuality and resilience, which are discussed. The radicalising drift from agonism to antagonism, when promoted at government level, is further related to the literature on securitisation. Lastly, one possible mechanism for societal radicalisation - 'antagonistic amplification' - is identified and directions for further work are suggested.

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Introduction

Since September 11th 2001, radicalisation and efforts to combat it have been a significant focus of activity and investment for governments worldwide. Despite wide variation in theoretical approaches to radicalisation - and consequently in understandings of what is

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involved in deradicalisation - radicalisation is almost universally considered as a process undergone by individuals, with the political spectrum and institutions of their society serving primarily as backdrop. In this paper, radicalisation is considered instead as a process taking place within the political sphere of a society. While this society-focused model draws on much earlier literature - in particular, social movement scholars' interaction-based understandings of radicalisation and terrorism - it is innovative in its stress on de-individualised patterns of discursive action as the locus of radicalisation, and the target of deradicalisation.

Using terminology developed by Chantal Mouffe, societal radicalisation is seen in terms of the corrosion of agonistic politics and its replacement by antagonism; this is related to deficits in societal qualities of conflictuality and resilience. Definitions of conflictuality and resilience related to the maintenance of agonistic political conflict are put forward; the concept of resilience used here also draws on the existing literature on resilience to radicalisation, at individual as well as societal level. The radicalising drift from agonism to antagonism, when promoted at government level, is further related to the literature on securitisation as a means of elevating contentious issues above normal politics. Lastly, a mechanism for societal radicalisation - 'antagonistic amplification' - is identified, together with possible historical examples, and directions for further work are suggested.

Radicalisation: Individual Models

The concept of societal radicalisation developed in this paper draws on a number of related literatures, but marks a break with dominant understandings of radicalisation. The role played by individuals in the process of radicalisation - both as radicalisers and as vulnerable subjects - has been articulated in multiple different ways, but the individual experience of radicalisation has generally been taken as central; even meso- and macro-level models of radicalisation tend to take the radicalisation of individuals as the explanandum, offering in effect models of the conditions which promote multiple cases of a phenomenon experienced

by individuals. This model considers a society and its political sphere, not as a setting within which the radicalisation of individuals take place, but as a locus for processes of radicalisation and de-radicalisation in its own right - processes which may find expression in individual, collective and state action. In short, this model de-individualises radicalisation.

Radicalisation is a vexed concept; while there are persuasive arguments to the effect that it is a contentless placeholder, substituting for an explanation of the origins of terrorist or extremist activity (Coolsaet 2019), arguably radicalisation has been given form as well as substance by the range and volume of scholarly as well as policy literature centring on it (Malthaner 2017). Broadly, radicalisation can be defined as the process whereby individuals come to adopt personal violence as a political tactic, or – more generally – come to adopt political tactics and framings which are incompatible with the continued functioning of liberal democratic politics, e.g. the designation of democratic institutions as a target to be destroyed.

In practice, most models of radicalisation can be divided into three groups. Firstly, many influential models foreground the experiences of the radicalised individual and the stages through which he or she passes en route to fully-accomplished radicalisation (see critical discussion in Veldhuis and Staun 2009:13-20). Some models stress the importance of contact with a recruiter, modelling radicalisation as a process of guided interaction akin to ‘grooming’; a model like this underpins the widespread adoption of ‘safeguarding’ models in counter-extremism practice (Busher, Choudhury and Thomas 2019, Heath-Kelly and Strausz 2019). Others focus on the role of ideology, locating the risk of radicalisation in an individual’s exposure to doctrines with a particularly close association with violent political practice; this type of model is reflected in the then British Prime Minister David Cameron’s assertion that “[i]t is not enough to target and go after violent extremists after they have become violent”, and that deradicalisation efforts must combat “all forms of extremism - not just violent extremism” (Cameron 2013).

What these models have in common, despite their many differences, is the assumption that radicalisation is a set of changes in an individual initiated by contact with an outside influence. Thus, these can all be considered as **contagion** models (cf. the conclusion of

Conrad 1907). This assumption is reflected in the ‘crime prevention’ logic used by counter-radicalisation initiative, whereby radicalisation can be interrupted by separating potential offenders from their potential targets: radicalising predators are isolated and removed from society, while their ‘targets’ are offered reinforcement and support, with a view to reintegrating them into the social consensus to which they formerly belonged (Edwards 2014). The appropriateness of any kind of micro-level deradicalising intervention is conditional on correct identification of the individuals involved; unless this can be guaranteed, the effects of intervention based on these models is liable to be stigmatising and discriminatory (Veldhuis and Staun 2009: 61-71).

A second group of models broadens the focus from the individual, relating the radicalisation of individuals to its social setting. Again, three sub-types can be identified. Models relating extreme-right terrorism to immigration or the trend of government policy (Piazza 2017a) effectively situate radicalisation as a deviant form of politicisation; the radicalised individual is responding to political developments, but in forms and terms which take him or her outside the parameters of legitimate politics. Models relating radicalisation to (increasing) economic hardship or other forms of material disadvantage, secondly, situate radicalisation as a dysfunctional individual response to external stresses (Freitag et al 2009, Knigge 1998). A third type of model incorporates elements of the first two, situating radicalisation as a response to personal experiences experienced in politicised terms; according to these models, individuals may be particularly susceptible to radicalisation if they believe themselves to have been disadvantaged or ‘left behind’ by societal change favouring other social groups, as in Hochschild’s ‘deep story’ of the American Right situating women and non-Whites as queue-jumpers enabled by a distrusted Black president (Hochschild 2016: 135-152; see also Piazza 2017a, Doering and Davies 2019).

These models share a focus on the individual within his or her society, embarking on a trajectory of radicalisation in response to social changes. These changes may materially disadvantage the individual, change his or her social situation in unwelcome ways, or simply be unwelcome on political grounds; in all cases the individual is in some sense responding to

changes imposed on him or her. Thus, these can all be considered as **strain** models. Rather than identify deviant individuals, these approaches aim to identify conditions which make individuals more likely to become deviant. The breadth of these models is inevitably bought at the expense of precision and predictive power: wide variation is observed in how the postulated effects manifest themselves, with considerable variation between different national contexts (Doering and Davies 2019). More fundamentally, the assumption that radicalisation can be readily contrasted with non-deviant political action remains, and remains problematic.

A third group of models partially departs from the dominant focus on individuals, analysing radicalisation in terms of collective political action. This is the case of the ‘bunch of guys’ model, which explains radicalisation as a collective process undergone by a culturally isolated group bound together by social ties; this can also be seen as a hybrid contagion/strain model, with the strain of the group members’ hostile social experiences making them vulnerable to the contagion of ideological conversion or a recruiter’s contact (Sageman 2004, 2008, Hoffman 2008; compare Cottee 2011). The “social identification” approach advanced by Veldhuis and Staun has some similarities in its hybridity and stress on radicalisation as an interactive process (Veldhuis and Staun 2009). This group of approaches also includes those mid-range models which focus on within- and between-group dynamics in explaining the adoption of extreme politics and violent forms of action (McCauley and Moskalenko 2008: 424-6; also see literature on ‘outbidding’, e.g. Tarrow 1989: 307-10, Edwards 2009: 169-90).

This group also includes those models which apply the tools of social movement analysis to the field of terrorism and radicalisation, whether by analogising supposed ‘waves’ of terrorism to the ‘cycles of contention’ analysed by social movement scholars (Harrow 2008), or by considering terrorism as a form taken by contentious politics under particular conditions, viewing ‘terror’ not as the property of ‘terrorists’ but as a communicative tactic which can be adopted or abandoned by different contentious actors (Tilly 2005; see also discussion in Demetriou 2018). More generally, approaches like these make it possible to analyse episodes of terrorism together with non-violent episodes, identifying the various

contributions made by mobilising strategies, political opportunities and discursive framings, and mechanisms combining and articulating these basic tools in different ways (Alimi et al 2012, Demetriou and Alimi 2018; cf. McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001, Tarrow 1998).

These can be considered as **group-based**, or meso-level collective action models. For these models, it is the group rather than the individual which undergoes radicalisation - a process which may, moreover, be partial, reversible and repeatable. However, the theoretical advance over the other models is qualified. The radicalisation of groups is ultimately observable only through the actions which individuals carry out and justify in the group's name; moreover, being considered as deviant political subjects, the groups themselves are contrasted with society more broadly, which figures as the arena within which they contend and the (legitimate) political structure which they hope to exploit. In short, despite their meso-level focus, these models ultimately retain the individualism characteristic of the other two groups, and consequently reproduce the underlying assumption that radicalisation represents a form of political deviance which can be contrasted with 'normal' politics.

Radicalisation: A Societal Model

The model of societal radicalisation presented in this paper is a macro-level collective discursive action model. The concept of societal radicalisation is not entirely new: societies as a whole have sometimes been considered as a target for radicalisation, as in discussions of 'mass radicalisation' (McCauley and Moskalenko 2008: 426-8). This model also builds on 'collective action' models, and understandings of radicalisation from within the social movement sphere more generally – cf. della Porta's formulation in which radicalisation is "a process of escalation from nonviolent to increasingly violent repertoires of action" (della Porta 2018: 462). Social movement scholars emphasise the importance of setting this process in its wider political context - "[a]ccording to social movement studies, radicalism or moderation in the forms of action is influenced mainly by the available structure of political opportunities" (della Porta 2018: 464). However, this model goes further, both in its emphasis

on discourse and in stressing that the discursive patterns of action themselves, rather than individuals or groups, are the objects of radicalisation – the things that are radicalised. As such, radicalisation necessarily involves those established political actors who through their interactions construct ‘the available structure of political opportunities’ as well as the social movement actors who find their conditions for action within that opportunity structure.

The key assumptions of the model are as follows. Firstly, radicalisation takes place within a society’s political sphere. A society’s political sphere has a core and a periphery; the core is defined here as the complex of more or less bureaucratic entities and processes within which politics as a specialised activity takes place, while the periphery encompasses all other social activities generally classified as political, from voting through political protest to terrorism. The boundaries of the political sphere vary from one society to another, as they are the boundaries of what is accepted as political. A society’s political sphere, as a whole, thus encompasses its political institutions, its range of accepted political behaviours and the accepted types of political actor, action, political demand, political motif and framing.

If radicalisation takes place within the political sphere, what is radicalised is the patterns of discursive action which constitute the political sphere. While political assumptions, beliefs, thematic combinations of ideas and framings can be considered as elements of individuals’ patterns of thought and discourse, they are also embedded in, and to varying degrees continuous with, the discourses of the various overlapping social groups which individuals inhabit (including local, workplace, kinship and religious groups as well as the larger and more fluid groups defined by shared access to mass media and social media). Discursive patterns of belief, and changes in those patterns, are accessible to individual consciousness and can be modified in use - indeed, changes in societal patterns of discourse take place through changing patterns of individual usage - but these patterns are not external to, or prior to, consciousness. To the extent that they are perpetuated, discursive patterns are perpetuated through speech and action by individuals, but they are largely perpetuated unreflectively; when they are modified, the modified patterns succeed to the extent that they in turn are perpetuated unreflectively. While individuals’ own discursive repertoires change as

the discursive interactions in which they participate change; it would not be appropriate to say that individuals are ‘influenced’ or ‘affected’ by these changes, barring unusually heightened levels of reflective self-awareness.

Earlier, radicalisation was defined in individualistic terms, as the process whereby individuals adopt political tactics and framings which are incompatible with the continued functioning of liberal democratic politics, e.g. the adoption of personal violence as a tactic. If radicalisation is considered as a phenomenon of discursive practice, this definition can be adopted with one major qualification, which is that individuals are not the focus. Radicalisation, in this model, is a process taking place within the political sphere, and simply denotes the development and adoption of political tactics and framings incompatible with liberal democracy.

Other established findings can also be adopted. Radicalisation may be reciprocal, cumulative or both. Reciprocal radicalisation develops through a process of increasingly antagonistic interaction between political opponents; cumulative radicalisation is a series of “actions ... associated with other actions and reactions, often expressed in some sort of reciprocal relationship” (Taylor and Horgan 2012: 130). Individuals may experience a series of ‘micro-radicalisations’ within their established patterns of discursive interaction, being prompted by particular events or encounters to adopt more violent, aggressive or confrontational tactics and framings; these small changes may be undone by equally small-scale deradicalisation experiences, or may cumulatively lead to a decisive, and harder to reverse, process of radicalisation (Bailey and Edwards 2017). These micro-radicalisations – and deradicalisations – also take place (continually) on larger scales, with the adoption of slightly more or less antagonistic framings and tactics by collectivities which function as discursive political actors: protest groups, political parties (and groups within them), trade unions, police forces, corporations, governments, etc. (A micro-radicalisation is a small movement towards radicalisation; there is no contradiction in the idea of large-scale micro-radicalisations.)

The political sphere of any society can be assumed to have a degree of stability over time, with the institutionalised core in particular having a tendency to self-reproduce and to perpetuate itself broadly unchanged. Discursive radicalisation can thus be seen as a maladaptive - and ultimately self-destructive - mutation in the political sphere's reproduction of itself. More specifically, societal radicalisation is considered here as a process in which agonistic conflict is progressively replaced with antagonism. The terms 'agonism' and 'antagonism' are used here in the sense proposed by Chantal Mouffe. Mouffe argues that a Schmittian friend/enemy distinction is fundamental to politics, liberal democratic politics included - "the very condition for the constitution of an 'us' is the demarcation of a 'them'" (Mouffe 2013: 6). Under liberal democracy, however, this does not entail the destruction of the enemy: while "the antagonistic dimension is always present", political opponents "are not seen as enemies to be destroyed, but as adversaries whose ideas can be fought against" (Mouffe 2013: 9, 7). While violent or disorderly conflict is relatively rare in the life of a complex society, social conflict more broadly - conflict motivated by relations of power and ownership, social exclusion and stratification, and access to resources - is a normal and irreducible reality. The task of liberal democracy is to sublimate these conflicts through representation, forestalling the possibility of destructive antagonism by allowing them to be expressed agonistically. Agonistic conflict, in Mouffe's terms, is conflict between political forces which 'can never be reconciled rationally, one of them needing to be defeated', but which 'do not put into question the legitimacy of their opponent's right to fight for the victory of their position' (Mouffe 2013: 9,7).

An agonistic conflict exists where two adversarial forces with equal legitimacy contend within the political sphere for conceptually opposed policies (e.g. disarmament and rearmament). Agonism becomes antagonism at the point where a victory for one of the two forces is identified as incompatible with the continuing normal functioning of the political sphere, such that the exclusion of this position - and, crucially, the defeat of its partisans - becomes a necessity. A society in which antagonism is increasing will become less hospitable to orderly and consensus-oriented debate, promoting alternatives of conformity and

anathematisation (whether ideological or simply group-based). The end point is the degeneration of the political sphere to the point of collapse, with political competition supplanted completely by antagonistic opposition between mutually radicalised forces - the state itself included.

This raises the question of the conditions under which such a destructive mutation can arise. The model presented here suggests that there are two key factors in the maintenance of agonistic conflict, in the absence of which agonism is likely to be supplanted by antagonism: conflictuality and resilience. Conflictuality is defined as the extent to which conflicts within society are accommodated agonistically within the political sphere: a zero-conflictuality society would give political expression to no conflict at all except for established antagonisms, so that any expression of internal conflict would constitute a disruptive shock. Resilience is defined here as the extent to which the political sphere sustains the resources for agonistic conflict: a zero-resilience society, combining an unaccountable government and a disengaged populace, would have no agonistic resources to deal with any disruption.

There is an inverse relationship between the contribution made by conflictuality and resilience in sustaining agonistic conflict: the higher the level of conflictuality that characterises the normal workings of the political sphere, the less likely it is that a political development will represent a disruptive shock calling on the system's resources for resilience. Conversely, the more resilient the political sphere is to shock events, the less pressure will be felt to embrace a higher level of conflictuality: given a sufficiently high level of resilience, a low-conflictuality society will experience many political developments as shocks, but will not face challenges in maintaining its version of political normality.

Conflictuality: "No Fighting in the War Room"

Conflictuality is a measure of the extent to which the political sphere reliably and sustainably offers expression to conflicts on multiple ideological axes, both at a time and over time. Conflictuality is strongly associated with democracy: "[w]hat characterizes democratic

politics is the confrontation between conflicting hegemonic projects, a confrontation with no possibility of final reconciliation” (Mouffe 2013: 17). Since societies and the conflicts within them inevitably change over time, democracy and conflictuality are also associated with change in the political sphere, including change breaking in from outside the political sphere: “democracy distinguishes itself from other regimes in that its elected political agents should be able to interact with challengers, with new political entities and their innovative collective action” (Ruggiero 2017: 595). However, conflictuality is a critical standard rather than an defining attribute of democracies: different democracies can be classified “on the basis of the elasticity of their structures and the degree to which they encourage political processes and social dynamism leading to change” (Ruggiero 2017: 595).

A lack of conflictuality makes it more likely that the political sphere will suppress conflicts and fail to accommodate political demands. The political sphere of a low-conflictuality society has a fixed - and narrow - ideological vocabulary, and is closed to new political actors and concepts. A society of low conflictuality will construct most social conflicts as external to politics - as purely criminal, as pathologically irrational or as belonging to the private sphere; any excluded conflict that does take political form will be experienced as a shock.

It is important to distinguish conflictuality from stability. A low-conflictuality society is politically stable, in the sense that the circumscribed regime of normal politics can easily perpetuate itself. An increase in conflictuality will lead to political polarisation being expressed more intensely and in more dimensions; however, for as long as these polarities are expressed agonistically, they reduce the likelihood that events expressing suppressed conflicts will be experienced as disruptive shocks. As della Porta notes, “[c]ountries with exclusive strategies are expected to experience conflict radicalisation, whereas an inclusive strategy tends to produce a moderation of conflicts” (della Porta 2018: 464). The danger in terms of societal radicalisation is not that disruptive voices are heard, but that they are misheard or silenced; not that one group calls for the defeat of another, but that this defeat is understood in non-political terms - criminalisation, violent repression.

In a high-conflictuality society new political issues emerge continually and are articulated in highly polarised terms, in shifting alliances often involving new political actors. A high-conflictuality society is politically unstable in the sense that its political sphere, responsive to changes within society, accommodates a high rate of political change. Such a society may or may not be resilient to shocks from excluded political conflicts, but will face few such shocks, since most social conflicts will be able to find political expression.

Conflictuality can be assessed in two dimensions, considering a society's political sphere at one time and its susceptibility to change over time. The first – synchronic - dimension of conflictuality is accommodated conflict: politics is understood in polarised terms, with multiple polarities overlaid on one another to produce shifting patterns of political alignment. This should be distinguished from party-political polarisation and from an aggressive style in general. Polarisation - on multiple axes - is characteristic of accommodated conflict, but these polarities are grounded in social polarisation(s) which (also) find expression within the political sphere; the polarisation of a two-party system may leave many social conflicts unaccommodated. Nor does aggression necessarily denote accommodated conflict: a high level of stylised, theatrical aggression, or personalised aggression demonstrated along party lines, may go along with a general lack of ideological polarisation, and hence low accommodation of conflict. A society high in accommodated conflict is characterised specifically by clashes of ideologies, in the political sphere and in society more broadly. In such a society, political debate is dominated by clashes between ideas rather than individuals; parties and social movements organise around political value propositions which are considered to be mutually exclusive, and consider political debates to be founded on irreconcilable oppositions. Conversely, a society low in accommodated conflict may be one dominated by a single ideology (stated or unstated) and/or one in which political conflict is entirely personalised.

The second – diachronic - dimension of conflictuality is the permeability of the political sphere. Permeability is defined here as the capacity of a political system to accommodate new ideological positions and new formulations of existing positions.. An

impermeable system is one in which political directions are set, informally or formally, by existing holders of positions of power. A highly permeable political sphere, by contrast, is open to new political actors, new goals and programmes, and so ensures that political institutions offer some representation to conflicts developing within society.

In the most conflictual societies, agonistic conflict is seen as a normal political phenomenon, while new forms and articulations of conflict can emerge at any time, by virtue of the permeability of the political sphere. In a highly conflictual society, not only does political and campaigning activity involve multiple direct, conceptual oppositions; it is possible for emerging interest groups and social movements to constitute themselves as recognised actors within the political sphere, even if they stand in overt opposition to rival forces.

In the least conflictual or most pacified societies - with low levels of both accommodated conflict and permeability - the accepted agenda for political debate only acknowledges the existence of a set, and limited, number of agonistic conflicts, while the political sphere is insulated from change or revision in response to developments in society. Politically such a society is extremely stable: the political sphere can reproduce itself unimpeded. However, it is ill-equipped to process either the articulation of conflict in the political sphere or new conflicts arising in society at large, and hence faces a constant risk of a shock irruption of conflict into the political sphere.

Intermediate forms between highly conflictual and fully pacified societies also exist. Societies with a high level of accommodated conflict and low permeability have a political sphere which is characterised by overt political conflict and genuine polarisation along multiple dimensions, but is not open to new entrants or new ideas; political debate is confined to the 'caste' of professional politicians and articulated in unchanging terms. Conversely, societies with a low level of accommodated conflict and high permeability are dominated by a single political ideology, which either excludes agonistic conflicts or articulates a fixed and narrow range of conflicts. Emerging political actors and interest groups can establish themselves as political subjects, but only within the bounds of the governing ideology. The

political language of such a society changes over time, but without any challenge to the tenets of political debate.

A transition from high to low accommodation of conflict may be brought about by the imposition of a political settlement by a governing class after a period of disruption or by the consolidation of a dominant political clique. A transition from high to low permeability may mark the close of a period of disruption and high political turnover, as the boundaries of the political sphere are established, or else follow a process of political entrepreneurship which redraws the map of political debate. Each of these developments renders a society more vulnerable to radicalisation. Conversely, a transition from low to high accommodation of conflict may follow the discrediting of an overly restrictive political consensus, or of the liberalisation - or overthrow - of an authoritarian state. A transition from low to high permeability, lastly, may result from the erosion of a single party's dominance or from the discrediting of a political class; alternatively, a reformist political sphere may embrace new and different agonistic conflicts and actors in response to pressure from social movements. By increasing conflictuality, these developments effectively deradicalise society.

Resilience: Horizontal and Vertical Hold

The second key variable in assessing vulnerability to societal radicalisation is resilience. The concept of resilience has been widely used in the analysis of responses to terrorism and radicalisation, both on the societal and the individual level. In both cases what was initially a simple and prescriptively valued concept of resilience - considered as a capacity for "returning to a state of equilibrium following some form of stress or adversity" (Stephens and Sieckelink 2019: 2) - has to some extent given way to more plural and nuanced understandings. Thus Malkki and Sinkkonen define resilience descriptively as "the way that continuity and transformation take place in the face of (specific) endogenous or exogenous shocks in all aspects of political life" (Malkki and Sinkkonen 2016: 286-7); this leaves open

the possibilities that resilience may involve transformation as well as continuity (Davoudi 2012), and that a particular resilient response may have undesirable results (Bourbeau 2013)).

We can distinguish between resilient responses themselves and their effects, which may tend to either stabilise or destabilise a society. Innes's formulation, that "[t]errorism seeks to manufacture uncertainty to induce a reaction that destabilises a social order" (Innes 2006: 223), whatever its broader validity as an assertion about terrorism, usefully distinguishes between the disruption caused by a shock event itself and the destabilisation which may be produced by a particular - transformative - resilient reaction; this distinction is developed further, in the context of differing forms of societal resilience, in Edwards (2016), which also stresses that neither continuity nor transformation is inherently a desirable form of resilience.

Discussion of individual resilience has travelled less far from its normative roots; to be 'resilient' to radicalisation is generally seen in terms of a positively-valued imperviousness to undesirable influences. One useful and relevant distinction is made in Stephens and Sieckelink's survey of professional literature in the field of Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE), which identifies rival conceptualisations of resilience (understood in this sense) among young people: "resilience as a shield" and "resilience through connection". The distinction recalls the larger distinction between transformation and continuity as 'resilient' responses. On one hand, 'shield' resilience represents young people's lives as continuing unaffected because they are impervious or oblivious to the appeal of the radicalising influence, and to this end encourages the inculcation of a "value framework that leads to the rejection of extremist ideas" (Stephens and Sieckelink 2019: 8). On the other, 'connection'-based resilience envisages young people as becoming more resilient by building "relationships of trust across society" (Stephens and Sieckelink 2019: 8); this in turn requires that young people are empowered to articulate all the stress factors which affect them and call on their resources for resilience, and empowered to respond accordingly. Fostering connective resilience thus requires "addressing the existential questions and concerns of the student" and "providing them with the tools and resources to affect change in their social and physical

environment” (Stephens and Sieckelink 2019: 14). In short, this model of resilience suggests that young people can develop the ability to respond to an external influence by situating it harmlessly within their established patterns of discourse, and encourages building capacity in reflective debate so as to achieve this.

The model presented here considers resilience - like radicalisation - as a property of a society’s political sphere rather than of individuals. Despite the broader horizons of the descriptive sense of resilience, the model’s normative framing makes it appropriate to use a narrower, prescriptive sense here: resilience is considered as the capacity of a society’s political sphere to respond to a shock without affecting continuing agonistic conflict. ‘Shock’ events are defined as the class of events which “disrupt the polity by threatening to impose unpredictable costs on its continuing operation” (Edwards 2016: 292). Shock events are generally perceived as exogenous - as “originating outside the political system [or] initiated by forces not already recognised and legitimated as political actors” (Edwards 2016: 292). The lower a society’s resilience, the more likely it is that a shock event will lead to heightened antagonism. As in the ‘connective’ model of individual resilience, societal resilience is considered as a product of democratic capacity: a poorly functioning liberal democracy is less likely to be able to absorb a shock into its normal discursive political repertoire, and is consequently more liable to see agonistic conflict supplanted by antagonism.

A society’s political sphere lacks resilience to the extent that shock events are likely to be met, not with an agonistic political response, but by framing the event in such a way as to put the political sphere on an antagonistic footing. A resilient society will not necessarily treat shock events as part of normal politics, bringing them within the scope of conventional political vocabularies; a low-conflictuality society may treat all challenges to its - relatively restricted - political vocabulary as symptoms of a variety of different social problems, or as nuisances needing to be removed. The key feature of a resilient democracy’s response to shock events is that they are not immediately treated as existential threats to normality, demanding a ‘securitising’ response involving the labelling of an antagonist.

Societal radicalisation is seen as involving an increase in antagonistic conflict at both the individual and the governmental level; resilience thus involves factors which inhibit both the core and the periphery of the political sphere from the development of antagonism. The concept of a governmental drift into antagonism - radicalisation from above, or from within the core of the political sphere - builds on the 'securitisation' literature: what Buzan et al characterise as securitising moves (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998: 25) may form part of the process of replacing political exchange with antagonistic opposition. This understanding of securitisation follows a constructivist reading of security as a discourse; the state "speaks security for its society" in the sense that it names an issue or conflict as exceeding the capacity of non-securitised 'normal' politics (Williams 1998: 438; see also McSweeney 1996). In other words, securitisation is considered as a form of discursive framing, albeit one which has a particular reach and claim to authority in society's political sphere thanks to its institutional grounding (Watson 2012, Balzacq 2005). By securitising a conflict, the state frames it in antagonistic terms, elevating it above the agonistic political sphere so as to allow the breaking - or suspension - of formal or informal rules governing normal politics (Bright 2012): rather than a agonistic conflict with an ideological enemy, this is now an life-and-death confrontation with an enemy which must be defeated in order for society to continue.

Resilience is hypothesised as having two key components, which can be considered as its 'vertical' and 'horizontal' dimensions: democratic accountability (without which a government is more likely to make antagonistic responses to a shock event) and popular political engagement (without which citizens are more likely to endorse and adopt antagonistic labelling). In an active democracy, with both engagement and accountability at high levels, there is a general willingness to articulate unexpected issues as problems that are capable of political solution, together with a confidence that political problems will predictably and adequately be addressed by responsive government action. The higher a society's levels of engagement and accountability, the greater the resilience to shock events.

This argument builds on the argument formulated by Eyerman to the effect that "democracies decrease the price of non-violent legal activity and therefore increase the price

terrorism [sic]" (Eyerman 1998; see also Piazza (2017b), testing and partially confirming an association between terrorism and "closure of nonviolent opportunities for political dissent" (Piazza 2017b: 112)). However, what is being suggested here is not that a decline in democratic participation removes opportunities for rational actors to participate in politics and consequently incentivises violent protest, but a rather less extended causal chain whereby radicalisation affects society as a whole, and can be countered both by citizens having opportunities for agonistic political activity and by governments being restrained from their own drift into antagonism by established mechanisms of accountability.

In societies of high popular engagement, essentially political questions - questions of the distribution of resources and power; of the constitution and recognition of collective social subjects; and of the purposes and goals of society as a whole - are seen as available for discussion in a variety of social settings. More importantly, these questions are seen as relevant to those social settings and to the resolution of disputes arising within them. A high-engagement society is a society with 'politicised' trade unions, 'activist' students and 'contentious' social movements; in other words, it is a society where politics is not a spectator sport. High engagement may coexist with low conflictuality, as in societies whose citizens are regularly called on to affirm the same distribution of power and the same social goals.

In a society of low engagement, by contrast, politics is the occupation of elected representatives and little else. Decisions on issues of distribution, recognition and social purpose are delegated entirely to the 'caste' of professional politicians; members of the public may discuss political issues in private conversation but have no consequential outlet. Areas of civil society which might provide opportunities for political engagement are either entirely lacking in activism or play host only to narrowly-focused, sectoral campaigns which do not bring wider issues into question: a trade union campaign to maintain wage differentials, a social movement campaign with the sole focus of preserving a local green space. Low engagement may coexist with a high level of conflictuality, as in a society where public apathy towards politics combines with the political representation of multiple ideological polarities (secularism vs religion, industrialisation vs environmentalism, etc). The presence

and absence of engagement is the difference between a society in which politics is experienced as an everyday reality and one in which, for most, it is observed as a spectacle.

The second, ‘vertical’ dimension of democratic activity is accountability. Accountability refers to the extent to which the government (and the institutional core of the political sphere) can reliably be influenced by actors in the periphery of the political sphere, including trade unions and social movements. Accountability is not a measure of whether the government does in fact respond to popular campaigns, but of how confident any campaign can be that any given effort will be rewarded; capricious or ‘ex gratia’ responses, even if they are relatively frequent, do not represent any better accountability than a complete refusal to respond. High levels of accountability mean that - through whatever combination of legal, political and cultural factors - any substantial campaign or civil society organisation which raises political demands can be sure that they will be actioned. In a society with little or no accountability, by contrast, the autonomy of representative politics is insulated against pressure from below; there is no expectation among members of the public, or even among political activists, that their demands will be met on any given occasion (even if on some occasions they may be).

Following the irruption of an excluded conflict through a shock event, a deficit in either engagement or accountability will create vulnerability. In a society of low engagement, few are accustomed to framing their experiences in political terms or seeking political resolutions - resolutions in terms of altered patterns of distribution or recognition - to the problems they face. In a society of low accountability, conversely, few have any confidence that significant political responses to social problems can be called for, or will be effective if tried. A shock event (such as a terrorist attack) will highlight the conflict which had been excluded and suggest that the political sphere is not working satisfactorily. Consequently, such an event will disrupt the orderly reproduction of the political sphere, highlight its deficits in resources for resilience, and put a premium on whatever resources it can call on. Whether because the government is not seen as being capable to deliver a political solution or because

thinking in terms of political solutions at all has become unfamiliar, a low-activity democracy will be liable to react by framing the source of the shock as an antagonist to be destroyed.

The most resilient society is thus one with effective engagement and accountability: a society characterised both by widespread engagement in political and campaigning groups and structures and by a high level of confidence that political change can be demanded and will reliably be delivered. In such a society there is general confidence in politics as an arena for problem-solving, the construction and recognition of political subjects and the pursuit of wider goals. Shock events are treated as a sign that the scope of the political sphere should be expanded so as to absorb the political force being expressed, or else as a sign of pathological developments in an existing political conflict. It should be noted that an active democracy is not necessarily high in conflictuality or socially just; the disorder which is handled without disruption may represent the exclusion or repression of multiple social conflicts.

The least resilient societies are those where democratic activity is lowest, lacking both engagement and effective accountability. Democratically inactive societies are characterised both by public disengagement from the authorised range of political practice (with activity in civil society taking purely non-political forms) and by mechanisms for accountability which are defective or non-existent. While the political sphere is functional on its own terms in normal conditions, any unexpected incursion on politics will challenge its capacity to maintain and reproduce itself, as the perpetuation of the political sphere is not guaranteed either by large-scale participation or by consciousness of its responsiveness to demands from below.

Intermediate states between the fully active and wholly inactive democracies include societies with effective engagement but little or no accountability, and societies with an accountable state but a lack of popular engagement with politics. Wilson and Piazza's finding that "the use of co-optive institutions enables autocracies to be more effective [than military regimes] at counterterrorism" (Wilson and Piazza 2013: 951) suggests that engagement increases resilience even in the absence of accountability; conversely, Aksoy et al's finding that "dictatorships with active opposition political parties and no legislature are the most

prone to terrorism” (Aksoy, Carter and Wright 2012: 823) suggests that, of all low-conflictuality regimes, it is those with both low accountability and low engagement that are most vulnerable to disruption. The political spheres of low-engagement and low-accountability societies depend for their self perpetuation on accountability and engagement respectively; each is resilient to some types of shock but not to others. In a society of high engagement and low accountability, the shock of a disorderly political event is readily absorbed into the ‘background noise’ of public political engagement, unless the shock rises to a level where the state is called on to respond. In a society of high accountability and low engagement, by contrast, mechanisms of democratic accountability are functional but not widely used; in such a society, shock events are manageable to the extent that they, and the state’s response to them, can be handled without innovation in existing structures of democratic accountability.

A transition from high to low levels of engagement may take place through the institutionalisation of representative political organisations and their effective absorption into state structures - for instance through the ‘occupation of the state’ by a political party - or by the professionalisation of radical and ‘alternative’ campaign groups. The defeat and exhaustion of radical social movements will also lead to a decline in engagement, as in the negative outcome of a ‘protest cycle’ or ‘cycle of contention’: in this scenario, political gatekeepers engage contentious social movements in exclusive rather than inclusive terms, narrowing their own political repertoires so as to preclude any concessions and hence leaving society with a more restricted repertoire (Edwards 2009). Institutionalisation and the ‘occupation of the state’ may also bring about a transition from high to low levels of accountability, through the atrophy of democratic mechanisms. Less pathological forms of the same transition can be seen when a party’s rapid success outgrows its internal democratic structures, or when mechanisms of accountability fall into disuse as patterns of political engagement change; an example of this second process is the disjuncture that can develop between radical grassroots union activists and a hierarchy integrated into the bureaucratic

political sphere. Each of these transitions tends to reduce resilience and hence increase vulnerability to radicalisation.

Conversely, a transition from low to high engagement is possible through the emergence of popular campaigning organisations in a society whose conventional political sphere attracts little engagement; higher engagement may also be achieved through the democratisation of existing representative political groups. More disruptively, societies may also transition from low to high levels of accountability, for example following the collapse of an existing political settlement and the discrediting of its existing caste of professional politicians. Although some are destabilising in the short term, these transitions all increase the resilience of the political sphere and hence reduce vulnerability to radicalisation.

Conflictuality and Resilience: A Typology

Drawing together the threads of the foregoing discussion, conflictuality (based on the political sphere's permeability and accommodation of agonistic conflict) and resilience (based on state accountability and social engagement) can be combined in a four-way typology.

A **conflictual** state is defined in terms of the representation of multiple agonistic conflicts in the political sphere together with the relative permeability of the political sphere to new entrants, and hence the relative normality of political change. A society can be classed as conflictual on the basis of high levels of accommodation of agonistic conflicts and of permeability, or because it possesses one characteristic to a high and the other to a growing degree (high permeability with a growing number of agonistic conflicts, or a high level of agonistic conflict together with growing permeability). While a conflictual state is not at risk of radicalisation, conflictual states are liable to polarisation and continual political change, which may be experienced as instability.

A **pacified** state is one in which the political sphere is not permeable to new entrants, ensuring that political change is very limited, while few or no ideologically-driven agonistic

conflicts are accommodated within politics. A society can be classed as pacified either because both these negative conditions apply or because one applies while the other exists in substantial and growing form - entrenched exclusion of agonistic conflicts together with declining permeability, or established impermeability with declining agonistic conflict. Although stable, a pacified state is at much greater risk of radicalisation than a conflictual state.

A democratically **active** society is defined in terms of the combination of ‘horizontal’ political engagement and ‘vertical’ democratic accountability; this combination makes it highly resilient to shocks, which can be absorbed into the political sphere through democratically accountable state action or reflective popular debate, or both. A society with a high level of engagement with politics but with limits to the state’s accountability, or a highly accountable state presiding over a society with low engagement, can be classed as active, as long as the trend is towards greater accountability, engagement or both.

Conversely, a democratically **inactive** society is one that lacks engagement and accountability, making it highly liable to be adversely affected - interrupting the reproduction of its political sphere - by the shock of an excluded conflict. A highly accountable state with low social engagement with politics - or vice versa - could be classed as inactive, on the basis that the trend was towards lower levels of accountability, engagement or both.

This schematic outline allows us to identify four broad combinations of society types:

- Popular Regime (political sphere is broadly **pacified** and **active**)
- Popular Pluralism (political sphere is broadly **conflictual** and **active**)
- Elite Regime (political sphere is broadly **pacified** and **inactive**)
- Elite Pluralism (political sphere is broadly **conflictual** and **inactive**)

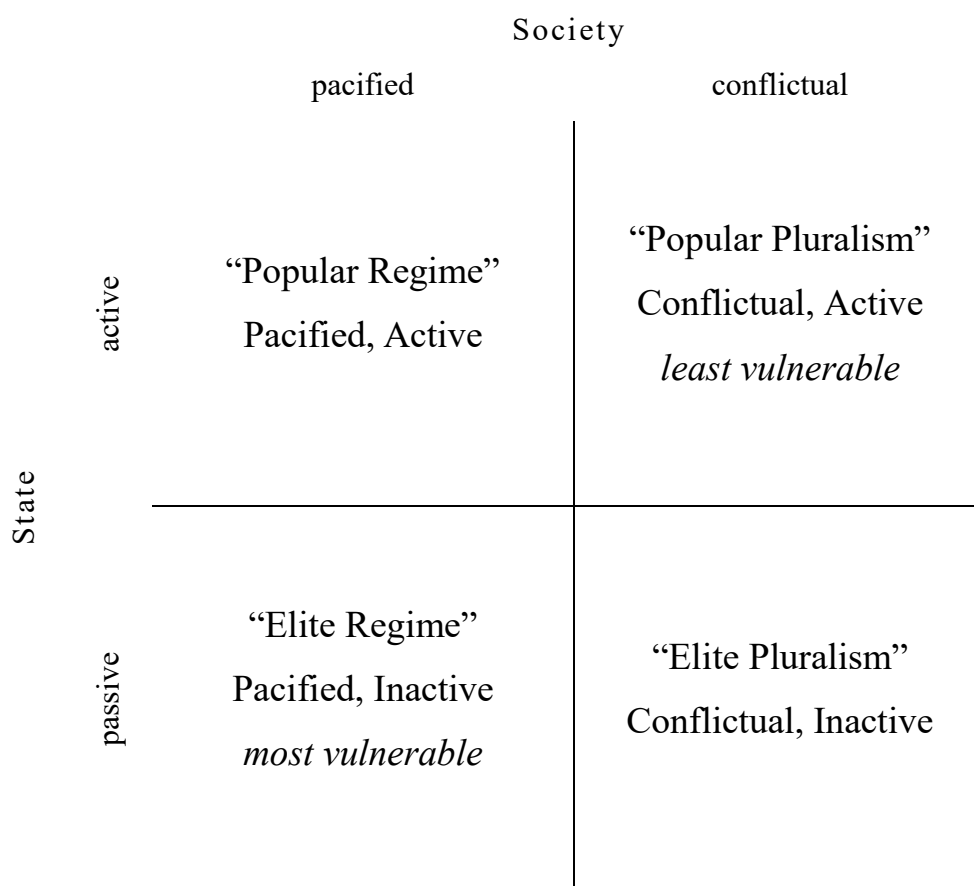


Figure 1: Conflictuality and pacification vs activity and inactivity

The society type with the lowest liability to societal radicalisation is a conflictual society with an active democracy. In a society of Popular Pluralism (PP), political conflict and change is continual, with multiple different groups making directly opposed claims. However, high levels of political engagement give these conflicts a grounding in civil society and in individuals’ lived experience, ensuring that both the political sphere and political conflict itself are seen as normal and sustainable elements of the life of society; moreover, the democratic accountability of the state ensures that demands expressed within society will be actioned, so that no group or set of demands is entirely or permanently excluded.

At the other extreme, an Elite Regime (ER) - a society whose political sphere is both pacified and inactive - is highly vulnerable to radicalisation. In such a society issue-based debate is limited, with new political actors encouraged to enter the political sphere only by working within the existing ideological agenda; unrepresented political demands and identities are constructed as a political threat or reduced to criminality. As such, the ER is highly vulnerable to political shocks. Moreover, when a shock event permits an excluded conflict to find political expression, the continuing viability of the political sphere is not guaranteed either by public engagement with politics or by the democratic functionality of mechanisms of accountability; the response of the state is highly likely to take the form of antagonistic labelling.

Intermediate forms of society are the society of Elite Pluralism (EP) - a conflictual society with an inactive political system - and the Popular Regime (PR) - a pacified society with an active democracy. An EP society shares the PP type's level of political conflict and change, but without that society's levels of accountability and/or engagement; an EP society is characterised either by disjuncture between a conflictual civil society and an unaccountable political sphere, or by public disengagement from a conflictual political sphere. In either case, an EP society is reliant on the inclusiveness of its pluralism - whether in civil society or at elite level - to avert radicalisation; it is liable to radicalisation at the point when an excluded conflict is asserted, either because civil society cannot process it or because the reform necessary to respond to it cannot be secured. In an PR society, by contrast, public engagement with the forms of politics is high and the state is responsive to citizens' demands; however, the possibility of either conflictuality or change is excluded from the political sphere. This makes any excluded conflict a potential antagonistic threat, which can only be avoided by absorbing it into existing processes of engagement and accountability.

From Agonism to Antagonism: Understanding Antagonistic Amplification

The significance of the model of societal radicalisation set out - somewhat schematically - in this paper is that it makes it possible to set aside unanswerable questions about the genesis of the radicalisation of particular individuals and ask new questions about radicalisation as a collective process, identifying associated mechanisms. ('Mechanism' is used here in the sense adopted by McAdam et al: "delimited sorts of events that change relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations" (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001: 25), with the qualification that the elements at issue here are those of discursive practice: framings, rhetorics, repertoires of action.) Agonism calls to agonism and antagonism to antagonism: to the extent that a particular social group is labelled in antagonistic terms, to that extent the adoption of antagonistic rhetoric - or worse - by members of that group is a coherent and predictable choice. There are also implications for deradicalisation: to the extent that an ideology's adherents are treated as legitimate participants, and potential victors, in agonistic political competition, to that extent 'radical' - antagonistic - versions of that ideology are not likely to arise or gain a following.

Work remains to be done on identifying the mechanisms associated with radicalisation and deradicalisation in this model. One such mechanism which can be detected in multiple situations is that of cumulative reciprocal amplification of antagonism (hereafter 'antagonistic amplification'). The process of antagonistic amplification involves a society's political sphere being colonised and ultimately dominated by antagonism. Oppositions and polarities which could be accommodated within the political sphere are articulated in terms which deny the possibility of political resolution (e.g. refusal of any debate, insistence that opponents should be silenced or criminalised), or presented as an opposition between democracy itself and the enemies of democracy. The introduction of the discourse of 'violent extremism' in the second iteration of the UK government's counter-extremism programme Prevent in 2009, with the implication that certain forms of ideology were inherently violent, can be seen as an example of antagonistic amplification (Edwards 2014).

The process begins when a force representing an excluded social opposition - one extreme of a polarity not represented within the agonistic political sphere - enters the political sphere, interrupting its self-perpetuation. In response to this shock, the conflictual force is framed - whether by the government, political organisations or the media - as an antagonist to society, needing to be suppressed. This may also involve a reframing of the shock event itself, as when the House Un-American Activities Committee reacted to the perceived threat of left-wing writers in the US entertainment industry under the guise of combatting spying and subversion. Antagonistic amplification begins at the point where this securitising move succeeds, with the broad social adoption of this antagonistic labelling; this is particularly likely to happen if the conflictual force reciprocally adopts the antagonistic framing of itself and its relationship with its adversaries. The second and third stages may then repeat, labelling a wider range of groups and individuals associated with the excluded political force as 'antagonists'; the process may also generalise from one agonistic conflict to another, labelling a second group of agonistic adversaries as antagonists in their own right. Antagonistic amplification is thus highly corrosive of democratic politics.

The group identified as an antagonist in the second stage will generally be broader than the actual adherents of the position framed as antagonistic. It may be an existing group with some genuine associations with given ideological positions, as where the social conservatism of some Catholics is used to attack Catholics in general; or an existing group with no inherent ideological associations, as when Jews are linked to antisemitic stereotypes; or a wholly constructed antagonist projected out of the terms of the ideological opposition itself, as when anyone adopting a left-wing position is labelled as a 'Communist'. Antagonism may be promoted deliberately and instrumentally, in defence of a status quo built on the results of past antagonisms (as when a party supported by White beneficiaries of racialised power structures promotes overt racism) or as a means of gaining short-term political advantage. Securitising moves - presenting the partisans of a particular cause or conflict as a threat to the continued existence of society - may have the function of promoting antagonism. It is also worth noting here that, just as any political issue can in principle be 'securitised'

(Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998: 23-4), no political position is inherently antagonistic in all times and all societies.

The three stages of antagonistic amplification can now be considered in more detail. First, a society's political sphere gives agonistic representation to some social conflicts but not others: in liberal democracies, conflicts represented agonistically are typically those between capital and labour or between different sectors of capital, while conflicts between (for example) religious belief and secularism, republicanism and monarchy or feminism and patriarchy have no direct representation. Unrepresented conflicts, unless they can be brought under the umbrella of an existing agonistic conflict, are seen as relics of former antagonistic oppositions which have now been entirely excluded, or else as apolitical - matters for private life, personal eccentricities or questions that might once have been political but are no longer. However apolitical the framing of an issue may be, it will usually be possible to associate one side of the conflict rather than the other with the status quo. (The Hanoverian succession is not currently a political issue in the UK; vocal partisans of the Electress Sophia could fairly be considered just as eccentric as their Jacobite counterparts (Tayler 2019). Nevertheless, the current royal house reflects the success of the Hanoverian rather than the Jacobite claim.)

An excluded conflict breaks into the political sphere when partisans of the defeated or suppressed side of the conflict take action in such a way that political life cannot carry on as normal. As such, the irruption of an excluded conflict is an example of a 'shock' event: an event which demands to be understood in political terms but exceeds the political sphere's capacity to deal with it. The incapacity of the political sphere to give any representation to a conflict on whose exclusion it has been predicated, together with the brute salience of that conflict in the wake of the incident, threatens to create a break in the self-reproduction of the political sphere: simply, it is no longer possible to carry on as normal. An incident like the 7/7 bombings is the obvious example of a shock of this type; the 'shock' effect of terrorist incidents is not owed (primarily) to their effects, but to the fact that they represent the forcible irruption of an excluded conflict into the political sphere. However, as the example of the HUAC hearings suggests, violence is not definitive of shocks, and not all political disruptions

involving property damage or even loss of life will be experienced as a shock. Indeed, politicians in resilient societies may make the deliberate choice not to securitise an act of political violence and hence avoid framing it as a shock; cf. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's response to the 1984 Brighton bombing (Thatcher 1984).

The third stage of antagonistic amplification is the general adoption of the antagonistic labelling. This is usually supported by the conflictual force's reciprocal adoption of antagonistic framing: antagonistic labelling applied to a conflict restricts - and, if successful, removes - the conceptual space for anyone involved to define it as anything other than antagonistic. There is a 'secondary deviance' effect (Lemert 1967): many potential agonistic adversaries will adopt the identity of 'antagonist' if it is imposed on them, purely because opportunities for agonistic conflict have been removed. Once established, an antagonistic opposition is likely to produce further polarisation, with the danger that other agonistic conflicts will be converted to antagonisms. In societies where the 'left/right' agonism has taken on antagonistic properties, this has often been the result of an antagonistic amplification process which began in a separate conflict: in the UK, the anti-nuclear movement, the 1984/5 miners' strike and the Irish conflict all led, through processes of antagonistic amplification, to the application of antagonistic labelling to the Left.

Not all societies are equally vulnerable to antagonistic amplification. High-conflictuality societies are not liable to the irruption of excluded conflicts into the political sphere; high resilience societies do not respond to shock events with a lurch into antagonism. Any of the developments identified as constituting a decrease in conflictuality - such as the repression of ideological conflict or the monopolisation of the political sphere by a single party - can be seen as increasing society's liability to antagonistic amplification, even if it appears to promote stability in the short term. Similarly, a decline in either government accountability or public engagement in politics will reduce society's resilience to shock events, making an antagonistic response more likely if they should occur.

Conversely, measures to increase permeability or to increase the level of accommodated conflict - by embracing new political actors, or by encouraging ideologically

polarised debates within the political sphere - will reduce susceptibility to antagonistic amplification, even if their short-term effect is to increase polarisation and the appearance of disorder in politics. Developments increasing society's resilience - increased popular engagement, improved government accountability - do not ward off shock events, but make it less likely that a shock event will elicit an antagonistic response from the political sphere. The more polarities can be played out as agonisms within the political sphere, and the more buy-in the structures of the political sphere have, the more the initiation of antagonistic amplification can be avoided.

However, the different components of security from antagonistic amplification - conflictuality and resilience - are not substitutable: a low-conflictuality society with adequate resilience does not become more secure by increasing its level of resilience, only by increasing conflictuality. Moreover, the constituent elements of conflictuality and resilience are only substitutable within limits: while the vulnerability of a society low in both engagement and accountability can be remedied by increasing either, a society with little or no public engagement with politics is inevitably vulnerable to an extent, however effective its mechanisms of accountability are.

Conclusion

The model set out in this paper is a contribution to the understanding of radicalisation and of the prerequisites for effective deradicalisation. It is presented here as a hypothesis awaiting testing. However, while it has yet to receive experimental validation, it marks a sufficiently substantial departure from existing thinking about radicalisation (while remaining grounded in the wider literature) to merit being presented in the form of this initial sketch.

Radicalisation is considered here as a process taking place within the political sphere of a society, rather than within an individual; the model is thus distinguished from existing models of radicalisation, which are categorised as based on models of contagion, strain and group action. The model's societal focus draws on earlier literature discussing mass

radicalisation (McCauley and Moskalenko 2008), identifying social factors influencing radicalisation (Piazza 2017a, Doering and Davies 2019) and analysing terrorist acts in cost-benefit terms (Eyerman 1996, Piazza 2017b), but centres society rather than the individual. Its conception of societal radicalisation builds on, but ultimately breaks with, social movement scholars' interaction-based understandings of radicalisation and terrorism (della Porta 2018, Tilly 2005), stressing discursive action as the locus of radicalisation rather than viewing the radicalisation of individuals and groups through their deployment of tactics and framings.

Societal radicalisation is seen in terms of the erosion of agonistic politics and its replacement by antagonism, owing to deficits in conflictuality and resilience. Agonistic politics is defined in terms deriving from Mouffe (2013); conflictuality is defined as the extent to which conflicts within society are accommodated agonistically within the political sphere, while resilience is defined as the extent to which the political sphere sustains the resources for agonistic conflict. The concept of resilience used here also draws on the existing literature on resilience to radicalisation as an attribute both of individuals (Stephens and Sieckelink 2019) and of societies (Malkki and Sinkkonen 2016). Conflictuality is further hypothesised as having synchronic and diachronic elements - the political sphere's accommodation of conflict at a given time and its permeability over time - while resilience is considered as the product of democratic activity both 'horizontally' (public engagement with politics) and 'vertically' (government accountability). The radicalising drift from agonism to antagonism, when promoted at government level, is also related to the literature on 'securitisation' (Buzan et al 1998), seen as a framing procedure (Watson 2012) which elevates the 'securitised' issue above normal - agonistic - politics. Lastly, a mechanism for societal radicalisation - 'antagonistic amplification' - is identified, together with possible historical examples.

An understanding of radicalisation as a societal process has major implications, whether this is taken as the whole picture or only a complement and corrective to individual- or group-based models. Given that the model as presented is an untested hypothesis, further work is clearly required. Operationalisation of the key variables - agonism and antagonism;

accommodation of conflict, permeability, political engagement, government accountability - is challenging but should not be impossible; this would make it possible both to validate this model against known historical examples of societal radicalisation and to resolve the question of its compatibility with dominant individualistic models of radicalisation.

While it is important to understand the processes of indoctrination and recruitment through which vulnerable individuals can be induced to become 'extremists', ultimately the focus on individuals may detract from the necessary task of capacity-building on a social level. This model suggests that societies whose political spheres exhibit low accountability and engagement (and hence low resilience) together with low accommodation of conflict and permeability (and hence low conflictuality) are highly vulnerable to radicalising mechanisms such as antagonistic amplification - which affect the political sphere as a whole and hence make the visible radicalisation of individuals far more likely - and that this vulnerability will remain whatever interventions are made on the basis of contagion-, strain- or group-based understandings of radicalisation. If this is the case, addressing these societal deficits where they exist is the precondition of effective counter-radicalisation.

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